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JAZZ INFORMATION

VOLUME ONE

NUMBER 24

BUNNY BERIGAN BACK WITH DORSEY

After leading his own orchestra for several years, Bunny Berigan is back with his old leader, Tommy Dorsey. Berigan takes Zeke Zarchy's chair in the Dorsey trumpet section tomorrow.

Other changes are taking place in Dorsey's band, which is now at the Meadowbrook in Cedar Grove, N. J. Carmen Mastren, veteran guitar man of the organization, is leaving; and Lowell Martin and Ray Linn, trombone and trumpet from Dean Hudson's outfit, have joined.

Berigan, who played with Benny Goodman as well as Dorsey before going out on his own, had recently rejoined his orchestra after a period of illness.

HAWKINS LEADS OCTET FOR BLUEBIRD

Coleman Hawkins, tenor-playing bandleader whose first recordings with his own orchestra were coldly received several months ago, has made four sides for Bluebird with an eight-piece pick-up band.

Besides Hawkins, the group included Benny Carter, trumpet; Danny Polo, clarinet; Gene Rodgers, piano; Lawrence Lucie, guitar; Johnny Williams, bass; and Walter Johnson, drums. Titles recorded were "When Day Is Done", "The Sheik Of Araby", "My Blue Heaven", and an original, "Bouncing With Bean".

Chicago

CHICAGO, Feb. 27. -- Mel Stitsel at the Green Mill, Lawrence and Broadway, is using Frank Snyder, old-time Dixieland drummer, to whip up rhythm for a new band of youngsters.

Another new hot group which has been showing splendid promise in rehearsal, and on discs cut for booker auditions, includes Carl Rinker, trumpet; Bud Jacobson, clarinet; Determan, tenor; Mel Henke, piano; Earl Roth, drums; and a bass. Although Henke is regularly employed by larger outfits (Maurie Stein at Chez Paree, currently), his yen for the small hot combination becomes evident at the drop of a beat.

Another fine jazz pianist looking for the right niche here is Paul Davis, now playing in the pit band at the State-Lake. George Zack, formerly with Muggsy Spanier, returned to New York last week.

Woody Herman will leave the Panther Room this week for some one-

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BENNY CARTER CHANGES PERSONNEL

Shad Collins, trumpeter who left Count Basie's orchestra several weeks ago, has joined Benny Carter. This in spite of reports emanating from the Basie band that Collins had hurt his lip and was forced to lay off temporarily.

Other new additions to the Carter band are Stafford Simon, tenor soloist, formerly with Pete Brown; Milt Robinson, trombone; and Sonny White, piano. White was formerly accompanist for Billie Holiday.

After a week at the Savoy Ballroom, Carter goes to the Howard Theatre in Washington, D. C.; and from there to Cleveland.

LUNCEFORD'S MEN PLAY S.F. JAM

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 20. -- A new batch of hot talent paraded before the third monthly session of the San Francisco Hot Music Society, at the Dawn Club, last night. About four hundred pair of ears were on the receiving end.

Featured at the session were four of Jimmy Lunceford's men and a local Dixieland combination headed by Lu Watters and Bob Misner. As usual, another dozen or so local musicians, including some from the Ray Noble organization, sat in before the evening was out.

From the Lunceford combination, Joe Thomas, tenor; Willie Smith, alto; Al Norris, guitar; and Edwin Wilcox, piano, displayed their talents. Jimmy himself and the rest of the band were there, sans instruments; and Jimmy handed the Society a well received pat on the back for its efforts.

The local combination featured at this session included Watters, cornet; Misner, trombone; Ellis Horne, clarinet; Monty Montgomery, banjo (that's right); Joe Blackburn, bass; Walter Claudius, piano; Stan Ward, drums.

Other participants included the Alley trio from the Club Alabam, including Vernon Alley, bass; Bob Barfield, tenor, and Wilbur Barranco, piano; Jerry Richardson, clarinet and alto; and Johnny Ursury, trumpet.

Lunceford's appearance at Sweet's Ballroom in Oakland helped the local hot situation. He appeared for a one-nighter about ten days ago, and is scheduled to appear again next Sunday night. The band was well received. After one-nighting around Northern California, Lunceford heads for Los Angeles.

-- David F. Selvin.

TWO MORE NEW RECORD COMPANIES

New York, Feb. 27. -- Following close on the heels of General Records Company and Rabson's, who recently announced their entry into the popular record field, come two more new companies, Nocturne and Ammor.

Nocturne, a division of Time Abroad, Inc., will specialize in high grade popular recordings, emphasizing new methods of presentation and new advances in recording technique. Its first release is a portfolio containing two vocal records by Peg LaCentra, with accompaniment by the Selinsky Quartet.

Nocturne's recordings are made by Time Abroad, Inc., at 29 West 57th Street, New York; generally known as Brinckerhoff Studios.

The Ammor Recording Company was founded in California eight months ago to sell 60-cent popular discs to coin phonograph operators. Now the organization has moved its main recording center to New York, and plans to market a 35-cent label. Claude Hopkins, scheduled to record for them next week, will be their first non-sweet recording artist.

New York

NEW YORK, March 1. -- The first of a series of jam sessions planned by Harry Lim was held at Nick's last Sunday. Those present were Henry Allen, trumpet; J. C. Higginbotham, trombone; Sidney Bechet, soprano sax; Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; Joe Bushkin, piano; Wilson Myers, bass; and Zutty Singleton, drums. Willie "The Lion" Smith was relief pianist between band sets. Among those present next week will be pianist Art Hodes.

Rabson's announces that their "Music Box" popular records will continue to feature house bands under the direction of Max Kaminsky and Joe Bushkin. The bands will be all-star groups selected from the personnel of the Bob Crosby, Bud Freeman, Zutty Singleton, Tommy Dorsey and Paul Whiteman orchestras. Ernie Anderson will supervise all recordings.

Fats Waller plays the 125th St. Apollo Theatre for a week beginning tonight. Tony Pastor's new band is booked for a month at Barney Rapp's in Cincinnati, beginning March 5. Teddy Wilson plays in Toledo March 1st, Dayton 2nd, and Cleveland 3rd, before moving to West Virginia.

Kelly's Stable, 51st Street night spot which has presented such bands as Hot Lips Page, Frankie Newton,

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BOOGIE WOOGIE and the Player Piano

By LOUIS HARAP

Undoubtedly, the Boogie Woogie pianists have developed a new piano technique. To those of us who are over fifteen years old, however, it awakens sleeping memories -- of the player piano. And if we follow through this hunch and look deeper, we find it verified by a comparison of the techniques of the inspired Boogie Woogie pianists and the mechanical piano. These men have made a silk purse out of a sow's ear.

Before going further, may I emphasize that I shall try to show only that a few features of the Boogie Woogie style are derived from the player piano. The blues musical material and the rhythmic aspects of Boogie Woogie are obviously quite independent of the player piano influence. Thus I do not wish to be taken as saying any more than is explicitly set down here. Furthermore, the following is a point of departure for a study of Boogie Woogie, rather than a finished and demonstrated theory.

Why the player piano influence? Because, around the turn of the century when Boogie Woogie was being played, the mechanical piano was sweeping the country. Although no one has as yet traced the approximate origin of the Boogie Woogie, we can at least suggest, pending further evidence, that it did not antedate the period of the player piano. After the turn of the century not only was the player piano the standard popular musical instrument for those who could afford it, but -- more important for us -- every drinking and entertainment place had its player piano. The Boogie Woogie pianists are all "fake" players; they must have learned what they knew by ear from the player piano. It is obvious that they did not know the classical piano technique.

In the case of Albert Ammons and Meade Lux Lewis, we know from their own account that they learned to play from the player piano:

"We owned one of those player pianos," says Ammons, "and all of us used it. Meade Lux lived in the same house and we were buddies and he used it too. Meade and me worked out our own system of practicing scales and exercises. When the keys were depressed from playing the rolls, we'd put our hands in those spaces and get an idea where they were on the keyboard. We'd do that over and over again, replaying the roll until we had it almost worn out. It was a tough way to learn the piano but we kept at it. Finally we got keys, chords and sounds all hooked up in our heads, and then, first thing you know, we could go for ourselves on the box." (Quoted in "Dark Magic", by Edward Morrow and Kyle Crichton, Colliers, June 24, 1939, p. 78.)

* * *

The technical deficiencies of the player piano account for certain of its peculiar and distinctive qualities: first, lack of the sustaining pedal; second, the percussive manner of striking the notes, because of the crude pneumatic machinery; and third, the difficulty of achieving expressiveness and nuance.

Now, each of these features has its reflection in the Boogie Woogie style. One of the most obvious devices of the style is the use of the trill. This was also commonly used in the player piano as a means of prolonging or embellising a note, or continuing a melodic line, in the absence of the sustaining pedal which was used for this purpose in the classical piano style. Interestingly enough, the trill was also used frequently on keyboard instruments of the eighteenth century which, like the player piano, lacked the sustaining pedal. This parallel goes even farther with the Boogie Woogie pianists, who prefer to play on old pianos in which the hammers have been worn down so that the notes sometimes have the metallic tones of the plucked instruments. Still more evidence of the relation of the Boogie Woogie style to that of the plucked instruments is the fact that these pianists do not even use the pedals whose potentialities made possible the classical piano style.

Just as the trill was employed by the player piano, so we find the Boogie Woogie pianists using it as an ornamental device, or even to emphasize a melody. Almost any Boogie Woogie record will supply illustrations of the former. As examples of the latter use of the trill to adorn or emphasize a melody, I refer the reader to the introductions of "Boogie Woogie Stomp" (Albert Ammons, Solo Art 12001 or Blue Note 2), "Honky Tonk Train Blues" (Meade Lux Lewis, Bluebird 10175), "Monday Struggle" (Ammons, Solo Art 12000), and "Pine Top's Boogie Woogie" (Pine Top Smith, U.H.C.A. 113). We can find the trilled melody also in "Jimmy's Stuff" (Jim Yancey, Solo Art 12008). Although I have not found that Pete Johnson uses the trilled melody, he does occasionally use the trill, as in "Roll 'Em Pete" (Vocalion 4607).

Another similarity, of the same order as the trill, is the staccato repetition of a note. We find this feature, for instance, in the "Honky Tonk Train", in Lewis' "Yancey Special" (Decca 819), Yancey's "Fives" (Solo Art 12008), and Little Brother's "Farish Street Jive" (Bluebird 10177), which seems to be unusual in having no trills at all.

Like the player piano, Boogie Woogie is very precise and percussive. With an enormous difference, of course; the former has a mechanical, metronomic precision, the latter an inspired rhythmic regularity. Although all jazz piano playing is percussive, the Boogie Woogie style uses a special type of inflexible, strong, unvarying touch also characteristic of the player piano. We can easily see that the latter had this "square" tone because the sudden way in which the air is released causes the note to be struck just as suddenly. The Boogie Woogie tone resembles this at least to the extent that it is sharply percussive.

Thirdly, expressiveness and nuance are lacking in both player piano and Boogie Woogie. The former is mechanical in the bad sense, because it plays pieces originally composed for expressive rendering. Boogie Woogie, on the other hand, uses musical material that is perfectly adapted to a non-expressive style. This defect of the player piano was due to the way the rolls were made. The perforations of the rolls were cut in lengths proportional to the time values of the notes in the score. Thus all tone shadings, accents, dynamics, and the subtle rhythmic freedom necessary to this type of music could not be reproduced. This "metronomic" method, as it was called, made the music sound as though executed by a metronome. In later years this deficiency of the player piano was corrected to some extent; but it was from the earlier crude instruments that the Boogie Woogie pianists learned.

They did not play the old repertory in the new style; rather, they improvised music to suit the style,

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JAZZ INFORMATION

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Editor

Eugene Williams

Associates

Ralph J. Gleason
Jean M. Rayburn
Kay Johns

NEW RECORDS

LOUIS ARMSTRONG'S Orchestra (De 30-11) Poor Old Joe -- Bye And Bye. In spite of some poor arranging, "Bye And Bye" has some of the vigorous enthusiasm we expect from Louis' records with his large orchestras. Higginbotham and Catlett are featured in trombone and drum solos. "Poor Old Joe" has even more of the same. These are Armstrong's best sides since his series of old-timer revivals last year.

BOBBY HACKETT'S Orchestra (Vo 5375) Bugle Call Rag -- Dardanella. Last sides made by Hackett's pre-Heidt band, these are no prize packages. "Bugle Call" falls short of the drive and unity this number needs, but features a few good spots by the leader and a driving tenor sax chorus (Bernie Billings). Hackett plays poorly on the reverse.

ORAN "HOT LIPS" PAGE'S Band (De 76-99) I Won't Be Here Long -- I Would Do Anything For You. Hot Lips Page, trumpet and vocal; Jimmy Powell, alto; Buster Smith, clarinet and alto; Sam Davis, tenor; Jim Reynolds, piano; Abe Bolar, bass; Ed Connery, drums.

The most surprising thing about this record is that it appears on the race list, even though it's only a pair of good hot renditions of pop tunes. The first side, a Page original, is slow, with fine muted and growl trumpet, and vocal, by Lips. Reynolds' piano backing is good also.

WINGIE MANONE'S Orchestra (BB 10-604) Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet -- South With The Boarder. Wingie Manone, trumpet; Buck Scott, trombone; Phil Olivera, clarinet; Conrad T. Lanoue, piano; Zeb Julian, guitar; Sid Jacobs, bass; Danny Alvin, drums.

These two novelty treatments do for their subjects in the same way Wingie handled "The Isle Of Capri"; except that this band is much less enthusiastic. Olivera's clarinet is good, and Scott plays a confident, rough trombone.

BENNY GOODMAN'S Orchestra (Co 35-356, 35362) Busy As A Bee -- Zaggin' With Zig; Stealin' Apples -- Opus Local 802. Personnel, for "Stealin' Apples" only: Ziggy Elman, Gordon Griffin, Corky Cornelius, trumpets; Vernon Brown, Red Ballard, Bruce Squires, trombones; Benny Goodman, clarinet; Toots Mondello, Buff Estes, Bus Bassey, Jerry Jerome, saxes; Fletcher Henderson, piano; Arnold Covarrubias, guitar; Artie Bernstein, bass; Nick Fatool, drums. For other sides, Elman, Johnny Martel, Jimmy Maxwell, trumpets; Brown, Ballard, Ted Vesely, trombones; Mondello, Estes, Bassey, Jerome, saxes; Johnny Guarnieri, piano; Charlie Christian, guitar; Bernstein, bass; Fatool, drums.

"Stealin' Apples" is a new version of the arrangement Henderson recorded with his own band on Vocalion, and acceptable as such. Elman, following Roy Eldridge's original, turns in some good muted trumpet. "Opus Local 802" is a tricky riff-original, also arranged by Fletcher, featuring some excit-

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for your courage in issuing this, the greatest jazz album in history. An album whose covers will protect six records by the most exciting musicians in jazz today. Musicians who give from the word *go*, and make no concession to commercialism. We all know that jazz, real jazz, originated in New Orleans and worked its way up the river to the Windy City. Once there, it settled down and in this rough, wide open town, it, in our humble opinion, scaled heights never attained before or since. Yes, good jazz declined from the year 1929 on for that was when Joe Public stopped paying to hear it.

Still this Chicago jazz did not die. A few musicians continued to cherish it, in fact some have never stopped playing it. These men give out in this set of records. They are the kids, lucky kids, who were the first jitterbugs, with this reservation, primarily they were musicians. Imagine being fortunate enough to hear Joe Oliver and Louis Armstrong in the same band, not to mention Hines, The New Orleans Rhythm Kings, and the great Bessie Smith. They say that no present day outfit could ever cut that old King Oliver band. With idols of this type it is no wonder that these same kids grew famous. These young Chicagoans absorbed this fine old New Orleans and out jumped the Chicago Style, and we mean jumped.

This album contains twelve old standards selected by critic George Avakian. A better choice of tunes would be impossible for here are the same numbers the boys played ten years ago when Tesch and Bix worked with them. Most of the compositions have been recorded by them before. All the more reason for purchasing these new ones. Compare them and see if they don't stand up with the good old days.

DECCA, we salute you! This is the set of records we should have recorded for the Chicago Style is our forte. We are more than proud to *sell* them, and at a price the Commodore never could have issued them for. Here is a bonanza for the hot fan, six records in a beautiful album, with a descriptive booklet by George Avakian, all for $2.60. (The Commodore will ship it post paid anywhere in the U. S. for $3.00.)

—Milt Gabler, Commodore Music Shop.

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George Wettling and his Orchestra
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NEW RECORDS

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ed Goodman clarinet and an open horn solo by Elman which is convincing, as he sometimes is.

"Zaggin' With Zig" is a Sauter arrangement, but with mainly the same features: the neatly executed ensembles, Elman and Goodman solos.

RED NICHOLS' Five Pennies (BB 10-593) My Melancholy Baby -- Robins And Roses. Red Nichols, cornet; Billy Shepherd, clarinet; Bobby Jones, tenor; Mike Bryon, guitar; Frank Ray, bass; Harry Yaeger, drums.

This is quiet music, and tasteful except for the commercial part of "Robins And Roses". Nichols' cornet is clear, pretty, and cold as ever; and the style of the new Five Pennies bears about the same relationship to modern swing music as the old did to the jazz of its time. The main difference is that these soloists (from Nichols' band) are not up to the standards of the old pick-up groups. Red himself and Bobby Jones are the best. On the whole, this was a ghost there was no need to raise.

BIG BILL (Vo 05360) Don't You Want To Ride -- Dreamy Eyed Baby. Big Bill Broonzy, his guitar, his fine stomping piano player and drummer, contribute two more energetic blues sides. "Don't You Want To Ride" is about the man who came up to Bill and said, "Boy, how long have you been from home? There's a free train runnin', don't you want a ride?" The slower coupling is an appreciation of the lady described.

LONNIE JOHNSON (BB 8363) Why Women Go Wrong -- She's Only A Woman. In two new original blues Lonnie Johnson continues his latest tendency, to be not only didactic but a little sentimental. Both of these are defenses of women, placing blame for their misdoings squarely on the men's shoulders. Lonnie's singing is as pleasing as ever, and the accompaniment by his own guitar, and Joshua Altheimer's piano, is intricate and solid.

TAMPA RED (BB 8368) My Two Women -- I Got A Big Surprise For You. Very mediocre stuff. Tampa's singing, kazoo and guitar are accompanied by piano and bass.

JIMMIE GORDON and his Vip Vop Band (De 7702) Henpecked Man -- The Mojo Blues. Two nice enough blues, well sing by Gordon, feature Pete Brown's saxing-with-a-smile, but a bad trumpet.

Chicago

(Continued from Page 1)

ni[illegible]ters in the midwest before his week at the Cleveland Palace, which begins March 15. Larry Clinton follows him into the Panther Room; which is advertising Artie Shaw as a coming attraction for the early spring.

Tommie Stovall, sensational pianist with the Bert Bailey sextet at the Oasis in Milwaukee, is set for the limelight as a soloist under a build-up planned for him by a Chicago journalist who recently put him under contract. Stovall is not yet twenty-one years old. Incidentally leader Bailey, an alumnus of riverboat leader Fate Marable's band, provokes much admiration by the ease and skill with which he executes alternate choruses on trumpet, bass sax and clarinet.

Benny Goodman's opening at the Chicago Theater this week was not heralded with the fanfare of previous years. A holdover was obviously not anticipated, since next week's billing has been announced already; and extra shows were not necessary to accommodate overcapacity crowds.

-- John Steiner.

New York

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Pete Brown, Coleman Hawkins, Wingie Manone and Bud Freeman, closed its doors last week, but may reopen soon in a new location on 52nd.

Pianist Gene Schrader leading a small combination at the Town Topics. Clarence Profit continues at the Village Vanguard.

Billie Holiday recorded for Vocalion yesterday, the titles including "Body And Soul". Columbia Records have signed Maxine Sullivan to record for them with Alec Wilder's Octet.

Jay McShann, Kansas City pianist, is leading a nine-piece outfit at the Century Room in K. C.

BOOGIE WOOGIE AND THE PLAYER PIANO

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or adapted blues melodies. But the finally improvised character of all Boogie Woogie music is witness to the genuineness of their musical instinct in fusing style and tonal material. Like the music of the plucked keyboard instrument -- the Bach fugues, for instance -- their music depended mainly on improvisation on the bare relationship of notes, rather than the varying tone color and expressiveness exploited by the classical pianoforte style.

There is very much more to the Boogie Woogie than those features which (if my conjecture is true) are based on the player piano. It does seem probable, however, that the Boogie Woogie players have adopted several features of the mechanical piano and welded them, with other musical elements, into a genuine piano style that William Russell has justly called "the most pianistic of all jazz styles."

READERS' COMMENTS

Detroit, Mich.
February 15

Gentlemen:

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you on the splendid job you have done with your paper.

It has filled a need long-felt by collectors and amateurs of hot jazz, and has gained their entire confidence by its strict avoidance of anything smacking of the commercial.

I particularly have enjoyed the section devoted to collectors items, and feel that this is a well-worthwhile feature, which will keep alive data that otherwise might pass into permanent obscurity. I tried to do something of this sort a while ago, and found it a difficult task, in keeping up a consistent interest. But in spite of the spots that lag this is so important a work, that of documenting the only authentic, incontrovertible historical evidences of our music, that I urge you to overlook the jitterbug's callow and vociferous indifference, and continue the good work.

I must also commend your record reviewer, and particularly your practise of reviewing race issues. The latter is a field that was neglected thoroughly to the present sorrow and disadvantage of the serious collector or amateur.

George Beall

Roxbury, Mass.
February 24

To The Editor:

I have found your magazine quite excellent in most respects. One thing, however, I do not quite like, and that is the large amount of space given to your New York, Chicago and other correspondents. I am sure the gist of what they have to say could be presented in smaller space. There would then be more room for features and real jazz news.

Eugene Rachlis.

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